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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this guide are to further the concept of language arts as the communication of ideas, to view goals in terms of specific aspects of child growth in language, to suggest ways of working with children in the achievement of goals, to provide guidelines for developing local curriculum materials, to aid in the selection and use of instructional materials, and to serve as a resource for faculty groups and individual teachers. The contents consist of (1) statements of points of view on the elementary school, motivation for learning, language, literature, learning materials, standards, evaluation guidelines, and change; (2) outlines of objectives for young children and those in elementary grades; and (3) extensive suggestions for teachers relating to language skill development, language experiences, communication skills, literature for children, and various ways of helping children develop language arts skills. (JM)

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COMMUNICATION

A

LANGUAGE ARTS

GUIDE

FOR

TEACHERS

K-7

Elementary Education Service, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia 23216 August 1971

CS 202136

I well remember my delight when first
The meaning of a printed sentence burst
Upon me; I had vaguely sensed a link
Between the symbol reproduced in ink
And what was read to me, but had not found
The kinship of the letters and the sound.
When suddenly the synthesis was clear,
And all at once I understood that here
Incorporated in these symbols lay
The language I was speaking every day.

William S. Carivin

Acknowledgment

The Elementary Language Arts Committee was composed of an elementary principal, a director of instruction, a language arts supervisor, a college representative, and teachers representing each grade level of the elementary school. Members of the Committee and of the staff of Elementary Education Service met during the summer of 1969 to discuss curriculum needs in the area of language arts and to suggest direction for committee action. Three two-day work sessions of the entire Committee were held during the 1969-1970 school year and a two-week workshop was conducted at Mary Washington College during the summer of 1970. Additional members were added to the Committee for the summer workshop. The Committee met for a two-day session in 1971 to react to materials in final stages of preparation.

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to:

- Further the concept of language arts as communication of ideas.
- View goals in terms of specific aspects of child growth in language.
- Suggest possible ways to work with children, individually or in groups, in the achievement of goals.
- Provide guidelines for the development of local curriculum materials.
- Aid in the selection and use of instructional materials.

In this guide emphasis is given to the following broad goals:

- Each child experiences satisfaction in the ability to communicate ideas and feelings through the medium of language.
- Each child develops ability to recognize and use ideas of other people as they communicate with him through spoken and written words.
- Each child grows in appreciation of beauty in written and spoken language.
- Each child recognizes that language skills must be refined as experiences broaden and ideas grow.
- Each child acquires, maintains, and improves skills of communication.

Certain basic factors which contribute to curriculum development have given direction to the preparation of material in this guide:

- Research in child growth and development.
- Accepted principles involved in the process of teaching and learning.
- Needs and aspirations of children and adults of the community to be served by the school program.

The guide is designed to serve as a resource to faculty groups as they:

- Examine basic principles or beliefs underlying the concept of language arts as communication.
- Plan for development of school-wide atmosphere that fosters freedom to communicate ideas.
- Plan an organization for instruction that enables each staff member to relate to children in ways that enrich communication and that contribute to the development of language arts skills.
- Select instructional materials that will aid individuals and groups of children to increase power of communication and interest in their literary heritage.
- Design ways to assess ability to communicate in terms of attitudes and self-concepts as well as in terms of skill development.

The guide is also designed to serve as a resource for individual teachers as they:

- Work with other teachers to develop a program that provides continuity of experience necessary for effective learning.
- Search for a variety of ways to stimulate, guide, and extend children's growth in language skills.
- Use instructional materials to meet language needs of individual children.
- Plan with and for children those experiences which help develop feelings of success and self-worth that are vital to communication.
- Assess progress in the development of skills of language arts.

Point of View

I. THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A UNIQUE INSTITUTION OF LEARNING

II. PURPOSE: THE MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING

III. LANGUAGE: A PERSONAL MATTER

IV. LANGUAGE: A LIVING, GROWING EXPERIENCE

V. LANGUAGE: A BODY OF INTERRELATED SKILLS

VI. LANGUAGE: A MEDIUM OF CREATIVE EXPRESSION

VII. LITERATURE: HERITAGE OF BEAUTY, INSPIRATION, AND GREATNESS

VIII. MATERIALS: AIDS TO INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

IX. STANDARDS: GUIDES TO CONTINUOUS PROGRESS

X. EVALUATION: GUIDELINES FOR DIRECTION

XI. CHANGE: A FORCE AFFECTING COMMUNICATION

I. The Elementary School: A Unique Institution of Learning

- "The elementary school represents the nation's most widespread provision for the education of its people."*
- "Of all educational institutions the elementary school reaches the greatest number of girls and boys for the longest period of time."*
- "The elementary school is the institution charged with the primary responsibility for the development of the skills of learning and of the child's rational powers in keeping with his stage of maturity. Consequently, it must provide the basic education in the skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and computing."*
- "The elementary school is also the primary institution for developing understandings and appreciations through the first systematic instruction for the child in the fields of history, government, science, mathematics, and the like."*
- In the elementary school the child may come to understand himself better, to see himself as a valued person, to relate well to others, to acquire a zest for knowledge, and to cherish his heritage.
- All later learning builds on the work of the elementary school.

* "A Statement of Policy for Public Schools in Virginia." State Board of Education.

II. Purpose: The Motivation for Learning

- Experiences which have the greatest impact on learning are those in which a child becomes deeply involved and in which he can sense progress.
- Purpose determines the extent to which a child strives to do well, and also the degree to which learning takes place.
- A creative product comes from a creative purpose. The child who imitates, attempts to duplicate some other person's effort; the child who creates, attempts to see what he can make of a situation.
- Teachers are challenged to provide many opportunities for each child to communicate with others and to capitalize on situations in which the desire or drive to listen, to speak, to read, and to write comes from the child.

III. Language: A Personal Matter

- Language is learned from interaction with the people with whom a child lives.
- Each child comes to school with his own language pattern.
- Each child must be accepted as a worthy member of the group regardless of his speech pattern.
- Out of his own experience, whether it be meager or rich, the child brings meaning to the spoken or written word. Broadened experiences with people, places, and things enrich and add meaning to language.
- Success with the use of language as a child listens, speaks, reads, or writes results in better relationships with other people.
- Successful total school experience is based on a child's belief that he is accepted as a person, able to communicate with his associates, capable of attaining his own goals, and fitted to live up to expectations.

IV. Language: A Living, Growing Experience

- Language is an inherent part of the cultural heritage.
- Language changes; it is built by living people in an active world.
- Language is alive; it is colored by personal ideas, idiomatic expressions, and regional dialects.
- Language develops power in communication as experience broadens and deepens and as ideas are freely expressed.
- The school accepts a child as a person, provides rich experiences, frees him to express his own ideas, and guides him in the development of more effective language skills.

V. Language: A Body of Interrelated Skills

- All facets of language—listening, speaking, reading, handwriting, spelling, creative writing, literature, grammar, usage, and vocabulary building—have the same goal, communication.
- All facets of language have specific skills to be developed.
- Effective oral communication depends upon the skill of both speaker and listener; effective written communication depends upon the ability of both writer and reader.
- Ideas are communicated more clearly when speakers and writers express thoughts according to accepted patterns of usage and form, and when listeners and readers have experiences which enable them to bring meaning to the spoken or written word.
- When teachers and children discuss problems, search for information, or enjoy good literature all facets of language are used and skill and power in language grows.

VI. Language: A Medium of Creative Expression

- The creative process thrives because man is eternally seeking answers to questions about the orderliness of the universe.
- Creativity is a quality which each child is capable of exhibiting in his living.
- Emotional security and feelings of self-worth are important factors in releasing creative potential.
- Opportunity to explore with all of the senses stimulates creative use of language.
- Extension of human experiences—aesthetic, social, emotional, physical, and moral—make new demands on a child as he strives to express thoughts and feelings.
- The school that values originality and creativity sets the stage by providing a warm supportive atmosphere and allowing freedom to experiment with language.

VII. Literature: Heritage of Beauty, Inspiration, and Greatness

- Literature reveals the accumulated thoughts, feelings, ideas, aspirations, and dreams of people through the ages.
- Literature helps to develop sensitivity to the ideas and ideals of our heritage.
- Literature tends to give spiritual insight, stability, and perspective in a time of change.
- Literature provides for extension of experience beyond the practical purposes of daily life into increased social understanding, appreciation of beauty, and personal sense of values.
- Literature embraces a vast quantity and a great variety of books—biography, folklore, poetry, and fiction—which help the child to know and interpret life, or sometimes to escape into a world of his own.
- Teachers have the responsibility for providing each child with the opportunity to experience the enjoyment, stimulation, and associations which are a part of the literary heritage.

VIII. Materials: Aids to Individual Development

- Children use all senses in learning, some learning more effectively through one avenue than another.
- Children gain information and ideas from many types of media.
- The library or materials center is a rich resource in providing the right book or instructional aid for each child.
- Language texts become reference books as a child seeks help in the development of language skills.
- Each child's experience becomes instructional material for others when there is opportunity to relive the experience through various media of communication.
- A teacher must know each child in order to select and use instructional materials in terms of the avenue through which he learns best.

IX. Standards: Guides to Continuous Progress

- Standards are ideals or principles which reflect society's expectations for education and provide guides necessary to challenge individuals and groups to greater achievement.
- Cooperative determination of standards by teachers and pupils produces meaningful criteria by which each child can evaluate his own progress.
- Standards must be attainable by each individual at his particular level or stage of development.
- Standards should be so formulated that each child has a sense of progress when working toward a particular goal.
- Standards become meaningful and important as teachers and children use every opportunity for genuine communication.

X. Evaluation: Guidelines for Direction

- Evaluation is the process of determining individual or group goals, planning procedures for carrying out goals, and assessing the extent to which goals have been achieved.
- New goals or next steps for individuals and groups evolve from evaluation.
- Evaluation should be a means of relaxing tension and easing anxieties as children see progress and are challenged to take next steps.
- Assessing progress in communication also means looking at progress in human relations.
- Evaluation is a continuous, cooperative undertaking which should have purpose and meaning for the child, the parent, and the teacher.

XI. Change: A Force Affecting Communication

- Advances in technology make possible the exchange of ideas with more and more people, increase the complexity of vocabulary from year to year, and produce an increasingly great variety of new media for communication.
- Population growth results in enlargement of institutions—communities, churches, schools, and clubs—with resulting need for adjustment to larger audience situations and to mass communication.
- Improvement of transportation brings people throughout the world closer together and makes development of broader skills of communication imperative.
- Mobility of the population and mass media of communication bring new terminology, regional dialects, specialized language, and foreign words and phrases into the total culture.
- Increased knowledge of child growth, deeper understanding of how learning takes place, more functional school facilities, availability of a greater variety of instructional materials, more adequate professional preparation for teachers, and continuous examination of the purposes of elementary schools are all factors which promote change in communication.

Statement of Objectives

The Young Child

•

The Child in the Early Elementary Years

The Child in the Middle Elementary Years

•

The Child in the Upper Elementary Years

THE STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The statement of objectives on the following pages is designed to:

- Express a child's total language development in terms of communication.
- Present objectives for language arts as developmental stages of child growth.
- State objectives in terms of a child's actions.
- Show continuity in language development throughout a child's elementary school years.
- Suggest the time at which children generally are ready to develop more mature language skills.
- Show scope of skills and forms of expression included in the elementary school program.

Objectives are expressed in four broad stages of development in language. It is recognized that many children do not fit neatly into any one category. Some children in the early elementary school years can communicate as effectively as older children, or the reverse may be true. With this in mind, it is hoped that the statement of objectives may serve as:

- A basis for faculty discussion and planning of language arts programs.
- A resource in determining objectives to meet local curriculum needs.
- A guide for observation of children as they interact with each other and with their surroundings.
- A basis for setting goals with a child.
- A resource for teachers as they help children evaluate their progress.
- A resource for teachers as they set long-range and short-range instructional goals.
- A basis for assessing effectiveness of local curriculum plans.

Statement of Objectives

The Young Child	The Child in the Early Elementary Years
Looks at the world around him with keen curiosity.	Enjoys making collections of all kinds of things.
Is interested in learning to know new people.	Shows growth in relationship to peers.
Tries his personality, his movements, and his ideas, in various situations with all kinds of materials and with different people.	Matures gradually to group life.
Is developing bodily coordination.	
• • •	• • •
Enjoys listening to a wide variety of sounds.	Continues to grow in powers of discrimination with regard to words, animal calls, music, and other sounds.
Discriminates among many of the sounds of the world immediate to him.	Attends to informal conversation of classmates and other speakers.
Derives meaning from what he sees and hears.	Attends to simple directions.
Is fascinated by and uses new words.	Listens with obvious pleasure to stories read.
Delights in being read to by adults.	Uses facial expression, gestures, and posture of person speaking to add meaning to spoken word.
Is developing ability to follow simple directions.	
• • •	• • •
Relates to children and adults in conversation.	Enjoys telling experiences.
Begins to use forms of nonverbal communication appropriately: laughter, posture, facial expressions, or gestures.	Shares ideas orally in fragmented fashion, usually by addressing himself to the teacher.
Increases power of speech and ob-	Begins to relate to other pupils, as well as teacher, in group sessions.
	Dictates words and sentences to ex-

The Child in the Middle Elementary Years	The Child in the Upper Elementary Years
Has developed a special interest or hobby and seeks to become an authority on the subject.	Seeks to understand and accept himself: • Physical development • Emotional reactions • Conflicts in feelings, thoughts, and actions • Relationships with peers, parents, and other adults.
Is influenced in all areas of communication by peer group cohesiveness and acceptance.	Works to develop a sense of humor.
• • •	• • •
Satisfies genuine purposes through listening.	Learns to concentrate to the point that he is oblivious to distractions.
Gives attention to the person speaking and shows interest, courtesy, and respect.	Listens purposefully, courteously, creatively, and critically.
Recognizes mood of speaker as factual, serious, or humorous.	Distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant ideas as he listens and reads.
Begins to enter with self-forgetfulness into ideas expressed by others.	Begins to detect whether a speaker intends to be informative, persuasive, evasive, or entertaining.
Begins to distinguish main ideas from less-important ones.	Understands the necessity for careful observance of directions, oral and written, and follows them thoughtfully.
Organizes and records what he hears for future use.	
Shows interest in stories or plays with longer, more involved plots.	
Listens to own voice and speech and recognizes need for improvement.	
Understands purposes of directions and follows them in a more detailed manner.	
• • •	• • •
Carries on conversations with other children and adults.	Values discussion as a way of developing unity in group thinking and action.
Uses pantomime and dramatization to portray characters and events, to create moods, and to entertain.	Uses discussion as a means of resolving an issue.
Begins to appreciate power and beauty in words as he uses more complex	Begins to understand that discussion is basic to the democratic process.

The Young Child (Cont'd)	**The Child in the Early Elementary Years** (Cont'd)
servation as he explores the world of people, places, and things.	press ideas in the process of making records or experience charts.
Enjoys saying nursery rhymes.	Expresses thoughts in unique ways and may use colorful words.
Uses dramatic play to express ideas and feelings.	Begins to realize that acceptable ways of speaking and writing can be learned and used.
Uses simple words and short sentences in relating events that are personal.	Uses "Good morning," "Excuse me," "Thank you," "Please," and other conventional expressions of courtesy on most occasions.
Participates in group talk largely in response to adult guidance.	Adapts tone of voice and manner of speaking to the situation.
Makes simple, informal introductions.	Speaks with acceptable diction.
Uses various media to express ideas and feelings: facial expressions, drawings, antics, music, speech, and collections of objects from nature and the world of technology.	
Begins to sense that some ways of saying thoughts and ideas are more acceptable than others.	
• • •	• • •
Begins to tell in sequence daily events, ideas gained from books and pictures, and the creative products of his own imagination.	Enjoys pictures and reads his own experience into them as he talks about what he sees.
Increases powers of visual perception by seeing more details, detecting likenesses and differences, and distinguishing sizes and shapes.	Uses labels on doors and objects to locate places and materials.
May know some words by sight.	Recognizes and heeds symbols such as traffic signals and road signs.
	Sees likenesses and differences in written words.
	Understands and uses concept of left to right.
	Reads experience charts and easy books.

The Child in the Middle Elementary Years (Cont'd)	The Child in the Upper Elementary Years (Cont'd)
sentence structure to present ideas in speaking and writing.	Is able to accept another point of view positively and graciously.
Distinguishes between conversation, discussion, and argument.	Conducts group meetings according to parliamentary procedure.
Begins to recognize value in group discussion.	Carries on conversation in a manner appropriate to the occasion.
Begins to apply guidelines for successful discussion: • Contributing ideas to the group. • Taking turns. • Respecting the right of each individual to a point of view. • Challenging, at times, an individual's point of view. • Avoiding repetition of ideas already presented. • Contributing to summary of ideas.	Speaks with poise and confidence in most formal situations. Holds to the subject in speaking and writing and develops points in proper sequence. Seeks to speak and write with clarity and individuality of style. Sets criteria and applies them to improvement of speech.
Begins to be conscious of need for clear speech. Is able to use telephone to make emergency calls. Introduces friends to peers or adults.	
• • •	• • •
Begins to satisfy curiosity through greater use of reference materials. Uses card catalogues and general reference materials to locate information. Begins to question what is read, checks on copyright dates, and seeks information about a subject from various sources. Understands the necessity for considering factual data before drawing conclusions. Reads orally so that others enjoy listening.	Establishes lasting habits of reading for pleasure and to gain information. Sticks to difficult study voluntarily to gain needed information. Shows increased concern for authenticity of materials read. Begins to distinguish between fact and opinion. Compares viewpoints of authors writing about the same topic.

The Young Child (Cont'd)	**The Child in the Early Elementary Years** (Cont'd)
	Finds familiar words and phrases on charts, bulletin boards, and in books and picture dictionaries. Asks for help with new words. Locates a book he needs by looking at title and cover. Uses table of contents to locate story or poem. Wants to take books home and read to parents. Begins to use many resources in seeking information. Learns, under teacher guidance, to use picture, context, and configuration clues and some structural and phonetic analysis. Discovers ways of recognizing new words independently. Recognizes commonly used words when seen out of context. Enjoys reading to others and begins to read with expression that interprets the meaning. Begins to become aware of purpose of punctuation in interpretation. Tends to engage in wide reading. Establishes some degree of independence in reading: • Selects stories, poems, and books which he wants read to him. • Chooses books for use in free time—to look at pictures, to read, or to locate specific information. • Develops some awareness of what makes a good book, story, or poem.

The Child in the Middle Elementary Years (Cont'd)	The Child in the Upper Elementary Years (Cont'd)
Reaches high degree of maturity in use of configuration and context clues and phonetic and structural analysis in word recognition.	
Uses dictionary for pronunciation, meaning, and spelling of words.	
Uses table of contents, chapter and paragraph headings, summarizing statements, and other aids as needed.	
Adapts speed of reading to varying purposes.	
Distinguishes between fact and fancy, and recognizes the use of figurative language.	
Reads newspapers and periodical literature.	
Follows sequence of events as plot develops in narration.	
Reads widely and independently.	
Has increased interest in building a personal collection of books and other resource materials.	

The Young Child (Cont'd)	**The Child in the Early Elementary Years** (Cont'd)
	• Often relates to people and places vicariously through literature. • Anticipates outcomes. • Creates and presents dramatic productions. • Selects stories and poems for dramatization.
	Reads own written materials to improve expression and to check for correctness.
• • •	• • •
Begins to develop some appreciation of the beauty of literature as he listens to stories and poems.	Enjoys a wide variety of literature.
• • •	• • •
Enjoys expressing thoughts and feelings through art forms. Prints or paints his name with large tools.	Uses better eye-hand coordination. Uses manuscript first and changes to cursive as muscular development is refined and as desire to individualize style is felt.
• • •	• • •
	Increases use of written communication: • Has reasons for writing. • Uses punctuation marks to aid the reader. • Improves sentence structure. • Understands need for paragraphing.

The Child in the Middle Elementary Years (Cont'd)	The Child in the Upper Elementary Years (Cont'd)
• • •	• • •
Identifies with characters portrayed in children's literature.	Appreciates literature as a source from which understanding of other people, places, and times may be gained.
Understands character, setting, and plot as elements of narrative writing.	Senses values which may be gained from literature.
Begins to associate authors with their writings.	Enjoys literature for its beauty.
Begins to appreciate values, style of writing, and various types of literature.	Begins to understand the power of drama in presenting ideas and stimulating thoughts.
	Reads drama as a form of literature.
• • •	• • •
Recognizes necessity for legibility in written expression.	Attains a degree of speed while maintaining legibility in handwriting.
Seeks individuality, yet works for increased legibility.	
Continues to use manuscript writing when necessary.	
• • •	• • •
Expresses ideas with originality and with some literary quality.	Recognizes need for correct form and appropriate style when writing personal and business letters.
Understands how correct punctuation makes written communication more meaningful.	Improves written communication: • Recognizes the value of an outline. • Uses resource materials and organizes notes in preparing a written composition.
Begins to use language books, dictionaries, and spelling books to improve usage and sentence structure.	

The Young Child (Cont'd)	**The Child in the Early Elementary Years** (Cont'd)
	• Begins to use simple outline in planning writing.
• • •	• • •
Begins to develop a concept of spelling as he prints his name and asks for words to print or recall.	Begins to extend use of spelling as need to write letters and to record ideas arises. Begins to use phonetic aids to spelling. Begins to build lists of spelling words for use in daily writing. Enjoys referring to picture dictionaries for word meaning and spelling.
• • •	• • •
	Begins to understand that correctness in language usage and sentence structure are necessary for effective communication.
	• • •

The Child in the Middle Elementary Years (Cont'd)	The Child in the Upper Elementary Years (Cont'd)
Writes simple "thank you" notes and friendly letters as the situation demands.	• Combines ideas obtained from several sources of information.
Edits own written materials.	• Organizes ideas in coherent and unified fashion.
	• Uses a variety of sentence forms to make written composition more interesting.
	• Evaluates written work to determine needed improvement.
	• Proofreads for mechanical details.
	• Seeks help in editing.
	• Begins to recognize the need for footnotes and uses correct form for recording references.
	• Takes pride in his own written work.
• • •	• • •
Increases ability to spell through use of individual word lists, spelling textbooks, and words needed for writing in content areas.	Displays a positive attitude toward correct spelling and sentence structure in written communication.
Uses thesaurus to enrich vocabulary.	Uses the dictionary and other sources in pronouncing, defining, and spelling new words.
• • •	• • •
Strives to use appropriate forms in language structure and usage.	Begins to see reason for understanding the structure on which correct language usage is based.
• • •	• • •

Suggestions to Teachers

Recognize That the Home Is Involved in the Development of Language Skills

Create an Atmosphere for Language Development

Build Readiness for More Mature Language Experiences

Involve Children in Planning

Use a Variety of Resources to Develop Communication Skills

Use Basal Textbooks to Improve Communication Skills

Know Literature for Children

Help Each Child:

- Improve Ability to Listen
- Communicate Ideas Effectively and Acceptably
- Develop and Maintain Interest in Wide Reading
- Learn Skills Necessary for Reading in Each Content Area
- Develop Power in Written Expression
- Acquire and Maintain Functional Skills in Handwriting and Spelling
- Follow Directions Thoughtfully

Recognize That the Home Is Involved in Development of Language Skills

The role which the home plays in language development is a major one for it is in the home that the child has his first experiences in communication. The language and ideas which a child brings to school provide the basis for further language development. In order to achieve maximum growth, the child must feel that there is close cooperation between home and school. Parents and teachers can make school life a happy learning experience when they keep in close touch with each other.

Parents and teachers share responsibility for the development of language skills in many w ys. Teachers may take the first steps in building cooperative relationships by visiting or telephoning the home to:

- Assure parents that their child is accepted for himself and that his growth is the major concern of his teachers.
- Invite parents to visit the school prior to its opening.
- Solicit special help with a school activity.
- Issue invitations to a conference or program.
- Report progress a child has made.
- Suggest ways that the home can extend learning experiences.
- Encourage parents to indicate instructional needs which they have observed.

A child speaks more freely and effectively if he feels comfortable with people and able to face the tasks of daily living. Parents and teachers can prepare children to meet new situations with greater poise and confidence by providing them with certain basic information. Each young child should be taught:

- How to say his full name clearly and correctly.
- The name of his parent or guardian.
- His address or a description of the location of his home.
- The number of a telephone where a responsible adult may be reached.
- How to identify wraps or other possessions.
- How to put on wraps.

As children become more mature, they also should be taught:

- How to report a fire.
- How to call police.
- The name and address of the family doctor or health service.
- How to summon the rescue squad.

Much fundamental language learning takes place before a child enters school. Parents and teachers recognize that experiences in the early years influence attitudes toward people and toward communication with them. Positive attitudes and language skills develop best when older people:

- Talk freely with children about shared experiences.
- Listen attentively as thoughts and feelings are expressed.
- Provide group experiences with children outside of the home.
- Encourage active play that develops large muscle coordination.
- Provide toys which stimulate creative play.
- Make available art materials, puzzles, and games to develop perceptual skills.
- Enjoy books with an individual child.
- Guide children in the proper use of the telephone.

When the child starts to read parents help by:

- Including reading in the pattern of family living.
- Listening with him to dramatizations of stories on radio or television.
- Expressing pleasure when he recognizes words on signs, television, or other printed media.
- Providing a variety of books and a place to keep them.
- Providing time and a quiet spot for reading.

- Taking time to listen to him read.
- Helping with words that retard reading.
- Introducing him to the public library and bookstore.

The home plays an equally important role in the language development of older children. Adults help as they:

- Listen attentively to accounts of school and out-of-school experiences.
- Allow young people to participate in family discussion of current happenings.
- Participate with young people in out-of-school experiences in line with maturing interests such as plays, concerts, movies, and sports events.
- Guide in the use of clear speech and effective language.
- Emphasize the importance of appropriately written thank you notes.
- Encourage correspondence with friends or relatives.
- Surround young people with a variety of reading and reference materials.
- Provide magazines and other materials related to hobbies or interests of older boys and girls.
- Discuss books, newspaper, or magazine articles, and moving pictures or television programs in the family group.
- Discuss with teachers special interests which children are developing, progress observed in language skill, or special instruction which the school may need to provide.

In many instances parents are aware of the role which the home plays in the development of language facility and take the initiative in providing such experiences as those just indicated. In other instances, teachers may need to develop the kind of home-school relationship which enables parents to see and understand the importance of well-rounded social growth to language development.

As more and more parents become aware of the importance of the home in the development of language facility, they will become more involved with the school in providing rich experiences for children.

Create an Atmosphere for Language Development

Each September a teacher meets a new group of children. There may be a "Bobby" with blue eyes, freckles, and restless hands and feet; a "Betsy" with brown eyes, bright smile, and confidence that all people are her friends; a "Tommy" with braces on his teeth, a serious look on his face, and an attitude of suspicion toward all adults; a "Susie" wearing shoes that squeak and a timid withdrawn air; and a tiny "Jack" who has apparently missed breakfast many times. All are individuals, each coming from a different living and learning environment, each uniquely different in physical make-up, personality, pattern of growth, emotional and social needs, personal values and concepts. All are alike in that each desires acceptance and each wishes to succeed.

The teacher, believing that uniqueness resides in every child, fashions learning opportunities to capitalize on and enhance individuality. A learning environment that values differences is characterized by:

- Freedom for each child to express his ideas and feelings.
- Success for ea .h individual in most of his efforts.
- Opportunity for exploration and discovery.
- Recognition of individual human value and dignity.

It is the teacher who sets the tone for this learning atmosphere. He demonstrates, first of all, a personal thirst for knowledge by raising questions, searching for answers, injecting fresh information into discussions, and sharing personal resources. He provides opportunities for children to explore and discover, then stimulates, questions, and observes. He communicates genuine interest and concern for the fullest possible development of each pupil. These are important steps in the creation of a climate for growth.

Knowing that first impressions have much to do with establishing a wholesome atmosphere for learning, each teacher gives much thought to the first meeting with the boys and girls. Effort is made to see that as many as possible of the following conditions exist for older as well as younger children:

- Contact is made with every child prior to the opening of school, either by visit, telephone call, or letter.
- The classroom is clean and orderly.
- Furniture is arranged to give maximum space for movement and to permit rearrangement as necessary.
- A homelike touch is added to the room with rug, rocking chair, bookcase, or hassocks.
- Fresh flowers are in one or two appropriate spots and several interesting pictures are hung at children's eye level.
- Books are attractively displayed within reach of children.
- A bulletin board has been arranged to stimulate discussion or further exploration in a curriculum area.
- Art materials that can be used without instruction or supervision are ready in a suitable work area.
- Simple science and mathematics tools—magnifying glass, magnets, counting frames, and geometric models—are laid out on a table.
- One or two parents are present to serve as hostess for other adults who may visit on the first day.

These details have been planned and arranged before children are expected, leaving the teacher unhurried and free to:

- Welcome children and/or parents.
- See that a child new to the group is introduced to at least one other child.
- Be sure that each child selects a comfortable desk or chair.

- Help each child understand that he is free to explore the new surroundings and to discuss findings with his neighbor.

Effort must be made to maintain throughout the school year the atmosphere, both interpersonal and physical, with which children were welcomed on the first day.

- Manipulative materials are increased and diversified to satisfy growing interests and to stimulate further curiosity.
- Learning centers, bulletin boards, and displays are kept fresh with materials prepared and arranged by children as interests shift and new areas of study are explored.
- Rooms used by special teachers or resource personnel are kept attractive in a manner that reflects activities in progress.
- Plans are made with children to keep materials and supplies of all kinds in order and ready for use whenever needed.
- Art and written expression of children are attractively prepared for sharing, and displays are frequently changed and presented to other groups or individuals when appropriate.
- Older children welcome new pupils, serve as guides around the school, and introduce other pupils.

Teachers are generally concerned with setting the stage for learning within individual classrooms. However, the atmosphere of the entire school is equally important. The principal who maintains supportive relationships with children and teachers and who is closely involved in the total instructional program, plays a major role in determining school atmosphere. Other aspects of school life also make contributions to learning.

- Fresh flowers, comfortable chairs, and a smiling secretary set a tone for visitors to the principal's office.
- Shining floors, growing plants, a friendly custodian, and educational displays allow corridors to contribute to learning.
- Good food attractively served, cheerful managers, neat tables, clean floors, unhurried movements, and voices at conversational pitch extend learning into the cafeteria.
- Programs planned and produced by children as an outgrowth of regular classroom activities allow auditorium, gymnasium, and music or multipurpose room to make major contributions.

The aspect of the learning environment which is probably the most significant in the development of language skill involves interpersonal relations. Here a teacher must be constantly alert.

- Group goals are determined and revised as pupils and teachers discuss needs.
- Progress toward achievement of goals is cooperatively assessed.
- Classroom leaders are guided to share leadership with less aggressive classmates.

- Children are given the opportunity to build friendships through such experiences as:

  Working in pairs.

  Conversing informally.

  Discussing special interests.

  Exchanging letters.

- Ideas tentatively expressed by thinkers who are insecure in discussion are supported and brought to the attention of the group.
- Children are privileged to work in an unhurried atmosphere which frees them to talk to each other, enables the teacher to listen, and permits a schedule to be reasonably flexible.

Of extreme importance to interpersonal relations and the total learning atmosphere is the spirit which grows within the heart of each child from a feeling of security and personal self-confidence. Again, it is the teacher who provides the leadership which guides a group to nurture this spirit within each of its members. It becomes the goal that:

- All spoken words be heard by an attentive listener.
- All written expression find sympathetic readers.
- Reason prevail if personalities clash or situations become tense.

In an atmosphere that promotes language learning of all kinds, each child knows that his presence and participation in classroom life are highly significant. He realizes that he has a share in developing and maintaining comfortable, wholesome, living, and working relationships. He senses that other children, as well as he himself, miss something when he is not present. He grows in self-knowledge and confidence needed for effective communication.

Build Readiness for More Mature Language Experiences

When planning experiences in language arts with and for children, it is of great importance to sense when an individual child is ready to learn. A child may be said to be ready when he is prepared and willing, physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally, to move to the next stage in any learning experience. It is generally accepted that physical maturity is an important factor in the development of readiness. Of equal significance are the firsthand experiences with people, places, and things which give real meaning to spoken and written language.

Readiness also presupposes that a child can see how each new experience relates to something which he already knows and that he can understand how it paves the way for the next steps in learning. Every child must be able to sense this continuity of experience as it relates to all areas of living and learning. Attention to readiness, therefore, is not limited to young children.

A child, regardless of age, who learns to communicate effectively must also be socially and emotionally comfortable at school. He must be reasonably confident that he and his ideas can be understood and accepted by his teacher and classmates. He must be willing and able to venture into new experiences and to experiment with new words, ideas, and forms of communication.

The teacher may determine the degree of confidence and skill with which each child uses language by:

- Observing children's behavior.
- Listening to and talking with children.
- Conferring with the home to assess background experiences.
- Analyzing test results.

The teacher does not wait for evidence of readiness to appear spontaneously but seeks ways to develop, at all levels of the school program, those attitudes and abilities which are necessary for the next steps in language development. She recognizes that most children need experiences which extend interest, increase vocabulary, clarify ideas, and develop auditory and visual skills. She provides opportunity for children to:

- Observe and talk about things in the environment, recognizing such relationships as: large-small, over-under, behind-before-beside, and to-from.
- Identify sounds as: loud-soft, high-low, or fast-slow.
- Identify likenesses and differences in concrete objects and pictures.
- Describe shapes realistically.
- Participate in choral reading and music.
- Participate in stories or poems read by teacher—repeating refrains, supplying rhyming words, or suggesting different settings or endings.

As experiences broaden and children become more mature, the need for more complex language arises and teachers see that each child is ready to face with confidence those activities involving all aspects of communication.

Listening becomes more than detection of likenesses and differences in sounds. It involves attention to details of conversation or story as children:

- Strive to separate main ideas from related details in conversation or discussion.
- Detect new or different words, expressions, or ideas as others speak.
- React to ideas gained from spoken language.
- Outline content of a spoken presentation.
- Follow the plot of a dramatic production.

Oral language becomes increasingly functional as children:

- Talk about interesting personal experiences.
- Describe new or novel sights.
- Discuss reactions to stories read.
- Strive to relate events in proper sequence.
- Discuss unfamiliar words—both meaning and spelling.
- Discuss ideas to clarify concepts and stimulate imagination.

- Tell original stories.
- Dramatize stories.
- Interpret words, sentences, or poetry in bodily movements.

Readiness for more advanced reading develops as children:

- View films or filmstrips to determine value for a specific purpose.
- Browse in a reading center or library to locate materials related to special interest.
- Discuss point of view of stories or articles.
- Follow directions to solve problems or develop an activity.
- Make frequent use of reference books such as the dictionary, thesaurus, or encyclopedia.

As children engage in such activities as these just listed, every teacher attempts to make sure that each child becomes ready for increasingly mature language experiences by:

- Raising questions or expressing interest at the appropriate moment.
- Supplying pictures or models to arouse interest or clarify ideas.
- Helping children to relate new ideas to familiar situations.
- Planning and evaluating activities with individuals and groups of children.
- Guiding in the selection of materials or media.
- Calling attention to organizational devices used in written materials—chapter headings, paragraph headings, italics, and picture captions.
- Introducing library aids—atlas, encyclopedia, card catalogue, classification numbers, and shelving arrangements.
- Instructing in use of film viewers, transparencies, record or tape players.
- Helping participants in panel discussions to organize information, speak clearly, share opinions, and concede points gracefully.

Each new learning experience depends upon previous learning. Previous experiences determine that which is still needed. At any level in school, the child starts where he is in his language development and moves forward from that point.

Involve Children in Planning

Involvement in planning enables children to assist in determining the nature of activities, to understand what is to be accomplished, and to face problems which arise. This involvement leads to increased self-direction, and helps children to grow in self-confidence and language skill.

Opportunities for developing skill in planning arise frequently within each classroom. The natural desire of children to tell something, to ask questions, to make plans, and to express their own opinions becomes a basis for language development.

The success of any planning activity requires that an atmosphere which en-

courages creative thinking and free expression of ideas prevails. The outcome for each individual should be:

- Better understanding of the power of language in the communication of ideas.
- A feeling of responsibility for continued participation in planning.
- Recognition of the need for continuous search for better answers to problems.
- Confidence in personal growth in language.

In the process of planning, problems come to light: problems related to vocabulary, to use of time and materials, to background experience, and to division of responsibility for carrying out plans. Finding solutions to these problems provides further experience in the use of language.

Planning may involve a large group, a small group, or a teacher and child.

- The total class may be involved in seeking solutions to a problem. Children may tackle such questions as:

  What do we want to find out?

  How shall we do this?

  What materials will help us?

- Small groups of children may plan individual responsibilities relative to the problem and decide on ways of working.
- Individual children may plan with the teacher for meeting specific needs or following special interests.

General planning sessions are concerned with broad aspects of a problem. After these sessions the class may divide into smaller groups, each with responsibility for various activities to be carried out in connection with the study. The following is an example of how children may be involved in planning a language arts activity.

Problem: How Can We Share in an Interesting Way the Books We Have Read?

Pupils and teacher:

Discuss purpose for sharing books.

List books read.

Select those to be shared.

Schedule time for presentations.

Small groups plan to:

Conduct a panel discussion of an historical novel.

Give a puppet show to depict an exciting part of a story.

Illustrate important scenes described in a book.

Write original poems to introduce a book of different kinds of poetry.

Dramatize an incident from an author's life.

Individual children plan to:

Write a publishers' blurb to sell the book.

Make a list of interesting new words and expressions gained through reading.

Make transparencies to use on an overhead projector while talking about a book.

Confer with teacher about books read.

Pupils and teachers may evaluate by discussing the following questions at the end of the first planning session:

Did discussion result in plans for sharing books in interesting ways?

Were all interests and ideas considered?

Did small groups get clear direction for next steps?

What other materials or supplies are needed?

How will work continue tomorrow?

Evaluation of the effectiveness of efforts to involve children in group planning must, because of the nature of the activity, depend largely upon subjective judgment. Such questions as the following may provide guidelines for assessment:

- Are all children involved in planning activities that affect them?
- Are group plans re-examined and modified in the light of new developments?
- Do children express opinions with confidence?
- Do children ask questions to clarify meanings?
- What evidence is there that children:

  Understand purposes underlying activities?

  Have gained a sense of direction that results in independent action?

  Assume responsibility for carrying individual and/or group work to completion?

  Use time effectively?

  Are interested in the efforts of others?

  Try to understand the ideas or points of view of others?

  Treat new and different ideas with consideration and courtesy?

- Do children show growth in group discussion skills as a result of involvement in group planning? Do they:

  Stick to the point under discussion?

  Listen carefully to conflicting or minority points of view?

  Raise questions thoughtfully and courteously?

  Employ conversational, rather than argumentative manner or tone of voice?

Concede a point gracefully?

Summarize ideas expressed?

Assume a share of the responsibility for making decisions?

For more detailed treatment of planning and the effective use of time, see pages 1-23 of the bulletin: "A Good Day for Learning" (Revised), published by Elementary Education Service, State Department of Education, July, 1970.

Use a Variety of Resources to Develop Communication Skills

Instructional aids designed to appeal to a wide range of pupil interests and to meet varied pupil needs in the area of language arts are available to teachers. These materials reflect diverse points of view regarding the manner in which children learn. They range from materials that are highly structured to those that challenge communicative powers of children. They are produced in novel and attractive forms.

School administrators, faculty groups, and individual teachers must select from this great variety of resources those which meet the educational needs of children for whom they are intended. Evaluation of materials must be carried on within a framework of beliefs about how:

- Skill in all aspects of language develops.
- Materials and other resources may be used to aid children in the learning process.

Basic principles to guide in the selection of teaching aids should be cooperatively identified by persons involved in both procurement and use of the materials. While no resource may meet every criterion, it is believed that the pupil should spend the major part of his time with instructional aids that meet most of the criteria suggested by the following questions:

- Is the material based on what is known about how children learn?
- Is the material in harmony with accepted objectives of language arts?
- Does the material relate to the experiences of children who will use it?
- Is the resource designed to foster communication?
- Will use of the material extend experiences, broaden interests, and lead to new discoveries?
- Is the resource in such form that a child can choose what he needs or wishes, or must it be used only in prescribed ways?
- Does the material permit children to respond in unique or creative ways?
- Does the material challenge children to think critically?
- Is the material worth what it costs in money and in time spent in use?

If materials are to be used effectively, the teacher must be thoroughly familiar with them. The following questions may serve to guide plans made for the use of an instructional aid:

- What objectives was the material designed to serve?

- Are children interested in the approach used in the material?
- Is the resource attuned to a particular child's best way of learning?
- To what degree may material be used independently by children, leaving the teacher free to work with individuals?
- How can the material be used to meet a wide range of individual pupil needs?
- To what extent does the instructional aid involve specialized equipment?
- Can instructional equipment be used by the teacher with confidence?

One way that a teacher can be sure materials have potential for capturing interests is to encourage children to bring items to school to explore as a part of the academic day. Given broader latitude to bring materials related to their own special interests, children can offer the teacher important clues for subsequent selection of additional material.

In order to determine whether a resource is attuned to a particular child's way of learning the teacher must know how a child learns best. The following questions may help as she studies an individual's learning behavior:

- What does he seek to do when given free time?
- Does he express ideas better in concrete or verbal form? In oral or written form?
- What does informal conversation reveal about interests?
- What does the child say about the way he learns or likes to study?
- Does he appear to receive ideas best through the ear or the eye—by listening or by reading?
- Does he respond best to praise or some other stimulation?
- What reinforcers does he need to strengthen productive efforts?
- What does analysis of his response to different instructional procedures or techniques reveal about his learning pattern?
- What skill or knowledge does he already possess that will help with new learnings?
- What do scores on verbal and nonverbal standard tests indicate?
- What needs are revealed by study of the file of a child's accumulated work?

Any instructional material makes a contribution to learning only when the child who uses it:

- Understands the purpose for which it was designed.
- Accepts it as a satisfactory way to meet a specific, personal learning need.
- Is thoroughly familiar with procedures for its use.

It is again the teacher who must help a child to make effective use of the resources as he develops greater skill in communication. She must help him:

- To identify a specific need.
- To select learning resources or aids in terms of purpose or need.
- To understand how to use a variety of materials or equipment:

  Picture files and charts.

  Dictionaries of various types.

  Reference books organized in different ways.

  Guides to periodical literature.

  Vertical files.

  Maps and globes.

  Transparencies.

  Programmed materials.

  Filmstrip viewers, record players or tape recorders.
- To develop independence in use of resources.
- To arrange suitable work or study space.
- To determine whether resource is adequate or whether additional material is needed.
- To plan ways to use human resources.
- To organize and apply information or skill gained.
- To plan ways to share information when this is appropriate.

A variety of resource materials can be effectively used to develop skill in communication when all involved in selection, procurement, and use:

- Know what children need to develop greater confidence and skill in communication.
- Secure materials to meet these needs.
- Help children to select and use appropriate materials.

Use Basal Textbooks to Improve Communication Skills

Textbooks are designed to aid in the development of skills, understandings, appreciations, and attitudes. They are organized in a developmental manner. This developmental sequence is based on knowledge of child growth and on much research in the curriculum area represented by the text. Activities and experiences suggested in texts are generally related to the interests of children. Most texts offer suggestions for a great variety of resources to supplement basic materials.

The uniqueness of an individual child, the variation in environmental factors which have influenced his growth, and the experience and resourcefulness of the teacher make it impossible for a single text in any area to become the total curriculum. It is essential that the teacher understand the text as one valuable aid to learning. In order to correlate content and approach to teaching in language,

reading, spelling, and handwriting textbooks, teachers must keep in mind the function served by each type of material:

- Language texts are guides to accepted use of words and sentences in both oral and written communication.
- Reading texts are designed to provide basic instruction in word recognition and comprehension skills.
- Spelling texts are guides to lists of words used by most children at various grade levels and to the development of phonetic skills.
- Handwriting texts are guides to legibility in writing in both manuscript and cursive letter forms.

Teachers' manuals that accompany textbooks contain statements reflecting the author's point of view about the content and approach to teaching in the curriculum area to be served by the texts. In addition they:

- Outline purpose, scope, sequence, and organization of the texts.
- Offer specific teaching suggestions.
- Suggest activities and experiences for children.
- Suggest varied ways to use the textbooks.

To use a textbook effectively the teacher should:

- Study the author's point of view regarding instruction.
- Compare the author's point of view with personal experiences and beliefs.
- Become familiar with the contents of the text as a whole.
- Consider ways in which the text may be used with individuals or small groups of children.
- Locate a variety of materials to supplement the text.
- Formulate a plan for use of the text.

The teacher plans the day around appropriate experiences in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The texts become useful tools as children satisfy their needs in communicating their ideas and feelings.

Know Literature for Children

Through literature people share the thoughts and sense the values that have motivated and shaped man's actions through the centuries. Individuals find kindred spirits in the characters who live in literature, and thereby gain insight into their own beings. The language of literature opens the door to new worlds where the brave and the beautiful live in fact and fancy.

Children want to understand themselves and the way they feel toward others. They want to know about the world and the people who live in it. They want to touch the lives of those who lived in earlier years. They want, at times, to escape from the realities of their own lives. Children will turn to whatever is available in their search for truth, fun, and beauty. Parents, teachers, and librarians have responsibility to satisfy this quest for understanding, information, and recreation with books of quality.

To help children develop literary taste, teachers must know children's literature and be familiar with authors and illustrators who create the books. The teacher who feels the need for wider acquaintance with good books may find it helpful to begin by reading one of the many available surveys of children's literature. This, however, is only a beginning. The books, themselves, must be read to experience the excitement produced through setting and plot, to become acquainted with characters who live through books, and to sense the beauty of word and phrase that characterizes good writing.

Awards have been established to honor outstanding writing and illustrating for young people. Each year books are identified as having made distinguished contributions to children's literature. For this reason teachers who wish to keep in touch with the best in children's literature should become familiar with the style of writing and the general format of award books and with authors, illustrators, and publishers who create them.

PICTURE BOOKS

Books for the very young are no longer limited to Mother Goose and traditional folklore, but range in content from pets to physics and in setting from city sidewalks to outer space. Many illustrators and author-illustrator teams have succeeded in introducing, through simple text and colorful pictures, concepts which will continue to develop throughout life. A little girl learns that a walk in the dark garden with daddy and a flashlight becomes a priceless birthday gift in Aileen Fisher's, *In the Middle of the Night*. A little boy tests the idea that nothing stops, only begins again in another way in another place in Charlotte Zolotow's, *Where the Wind Stops*. These and many other ideas that are presented in picture books for young children also make thought provoking reading for older boys and girls.

FICTION

Fiction provides children with the opportunity to learn to know people who never were and to share in events that never happened. It furnishes entertainment and affords pleasure. It takes children's minds out of their own small worlds into the larger universe. Fiction often gives a true picture of people, places, or times. It allows readers to share vicariously in home and community life of people in other places and other times and to experience their triumphs and failures. Some children may be able to identify with character and setting in ways that help to resolve personal problems or to relieve tensions growing out of home and school relationships. This kind of wholesome child-book interaction is most likely to occur when children have opportunity to explore freely a variety of literary materials and to react to the content in unstructured ways. The right book for the right child is largely a matter of personal interest and social or emotional readiness.

BIOGRAPHY

Biography rivals fiction in popularity with young people. In the hands of a skillful writer the life of a real person can be as exciting as the exploits of a fictional hero. Incidents from the lives of heroes living and dead are being written for children in the early school years. Many writers now provide older elementary readers with biographies of high literary quality.

FOLKLORE

Folk literature began as people gathered to praise their heroes, to express joys and sorrows, and to wonder about things they did not understand. Out of this folklore grew stories which

were kept alive by storytellers or minstrels who wove them into songs and chants.

The whole realm of folklore has been enriched immeasurably in recent years by writers who have collected tales from Africa, South America, Alaska, islands of the Caribbean, the South Sea Islands, and many other places where literature continues to be preserved and passed from generation to generation by the storyteller. America also has its store of folklore. Many tales associated with frontier life grew when other forms of recreation and communication were limited. Collections of these tales have been made by writers who were anxious to preserve this part of our heritage.

Myths and legends are often associated with folklore in the minds of young readers. Teachers can help them understand that, through the ages, as man has searched his imagination and related the events of his life to forces of nature, he has developed supernatural heroes. Myths—imaginary stories dealing with gods and goddesses—have grown out of this search for meaning. A legend, on the other hand, is based on some historical truth that, embroidered by imagination, often gives the hero stature and nobility that he did not possess in life. Many people associated with the early history of this country have become legendary heroes: Daniel Boone, John Henry, Casey Jones, and Johnny Appleseed, to mention a few.

Fables—short tales which include a pointed moral—usually feature an animal which speaks as a human. The best-known fables are associated with the name of a Greek slave, Aesop. Others, originating in the Orient, also have become a familiar part of literature for children.

Although fairy tales are closely related in form and spirit to folk literature, many have become associated with the names of their editors or collectors: Andrew Lang, Charles Perrault, and the Brothers Grimm, for example. Other tales come directly from the pens of gifted authors. Therefore, the term *fairy tale* includes modern stories of a fanciful nature as well as folk tales.

When folk literature is viewed by readers, whether young or old, simply as tales told by unlettered people, this literary form loses its real significance. As parents and teachers become acquainted with the world's rich store of folklore, they can help children relate these tales to the cultures which produced them and to appreciate them as art forms of real literary worth.

POETRY

Poetry is difficult to define. It is not as much a question of *what* it is, but rather *how* it makes a person feel. It can call forth tears or laughter; it can stimulate thoughts or dreams; it can tell about the here and now, or point to a world beyond the stars. Teachers who know poetry and are able to quote bits of verse to make a point or create a mood will find that interest in poetry grows.

Poetry is meant to be heard. Imagery inherent in the language of poetry is re-created as children hear it read with appropriate rhythm and expression. Recordings, read by authors or by professionally trained readers, are available to help teachers and children understand and appreciate the language of poetry. Choral reading or verse speaking choirs can arouse additional interest as children relate poetry to the folk chants from which poetic expression grew. Children respond to poetry when there is opportunity to enjoy it with others who share their love for the music of words.

Many resources are available to keep teachers informed about books for children:

- Many school divisions plan opportunities to inform teachers about new books for children.

- Teachers' guides that accompany basal reading texts include lists of books for additional reading.
- Most encyclopedias contain detailed information about folk literature of the world.
- Many lists prepared by librarians and specialists in children's literature carry brief annotations that provide clues to content.
- Book sections of daily and Sunday newspapers often publish reviews of books which have not yet appeared on other lists.
- Films, tapes, film strips, and educational television programs make children's literature available through a variety of media to introduce or enrich the abundance of printed materials available to homes, schools, and libraries.
- Publishers of children's books issue attractively illustrated catalogues which are available to teachers upon request.

Knowledge of books includes familiarity with the authors and illustrators who produce them. This knowledge provides a clue to style of writing and literary quality. It also enables a teacher to help a child to identify with authors and illustrators as people, thus widening avenues of communication between writer and reader. Most elementary school libraries today contain biographical reference books which focus on authors and illustrators of juvenile literature. *The Elementary English Journal*, *The Horn Book Magazine*, and the *School Library Journal* include, in addition to reviews of current books, biographical sketches of authors and illustrators.

At all ages children are capable of listening to stories far beyond the level at which they are able to read. Even with a busy schedule, teachers who view literature as a means by which children may live intimately with expressive, life-lifting language, will find time to read aloud to children. Many poems, ballads, plays, and stories have been recorded by well known actors and storytellers. With the aid of various types of record players now available, these can be enjoyed by individuals or small groups of children. Individuals who read well orally may prepare selections to read to classmates or groups from other classes. Teachers may also help pupils plan other ways to share reading interests and reactions to literary selections. Such occasions provide opportunities to stretch young minds.

To stimulate and nurture interest in literature parents, teachers, and librarians should make every effort to see that children have access to a variety in literature: prose and poetry, fact and fiction, classic and current. Paper-backed editions of books with literary quality make it possible to supply a variety of materials on a small budget.

It is important that children also become acquainted with some books in original editions. They should have opportunity to enjoy *Peter Rabbit* or *The Tailor of Gloucester* as Beatrix Potter designed them or to visit *Rabbit Hill* through Robert Lawson's illustrations in the award winning edition. Authors, illustrators, and publishers cooperate to produce quality materials and children should be able to appreciate this fact through first-hand contact with beautiful books.

The person who grows in ability to interpret and appreciate literature on increasingly higher levels of maturity will derive real value and lifelong pleasure from reading.

. . . Improve Ability to Listen

The first step in the development of communication is taken through listening. Before the invention of printing, listening was the primary means of learning. With changes brought about by radio, television, and motion pictures, listening has again assumed a significant place in modern communication. Through listening an individual receives many of his ideas and much of the information which become a part of his beliefs and attitudes. It is through listening that speech is learned, for without the ability to hear a child remains mute until he is taught to talk.

Listening involves more than the ability to hear or to detect sounds. It includes active participation with the speaker. It involves following the thread of a conversation, and the development of an idea. In interpreting the spoken word, the listener also takes into account gestures, facial expressions, posture, and tone of voice as well as words used by the speaker.

Many factors other than hearing accuity influence the ability to listen effectively:

- A listener interprets the words of a speaker in terms of his own experience.
- Familiarity with language used is closely related to the interest and ability of a listener to follow a speaker.
- Interest or purpose determines the length of time that anyone, especially a young child, can listen.
- Emotional strain related to family life, peer relationships, or feelings of inadequacy may disrupt powers of concentration needed for attentive or critical listening.
- Some children learn to tune themselves out when there are too many instructions, too much conversation, or too many distractions.

Signs that a child has lost communication with a speaker are not hard to recognize. Teachers long have been aware that listless posture, wandering eyes, and restless shuffling of books or pencils indicate inattention.

Children who have accustomed themselves to the passive listening that allows them to live with such background noise as the chatter of playmates, the sound of radio or television, or the conversation of adults, will probably need help when the occasion arises for attentive listening.

Purpose determines to a large degree the extent and quality of a listener's participation in the act of communicating. This is evident as one observes a child engrossed in story telling time and a child or an adult absorbed in a television program. In situations where purpose may not be clearly related to a child's personal interest it may be necessary for a teacher to help him identify the purpose so that he can be ready for the kind of listening required in a particular situation.

With young children the teacher makes sure that each child:

- Has a purpose for listening that has personal significance.
- Realizes the importance of the message.
- Can see the speaker and hear the voice.
- Is ready to listen and has focused attention on the speaker.
- Understands the language used.

- Feels free to ask questions when he does not understand.

Teachers may need to help older children develop skill in separating important ideas from supporting details in a discussion of a more formal oral presentation. In doing this it may be necessary for children to take notes while listening, to discuss points noted, and to prepare an outline. Such an outline can become the basis for further discussion of points at issue.

Guidelines, cooperatively developed, and frequently discussed can help children to assess ability to listen critically. Guidelines might include such criteria as the following:

- Listens without interruption by word or deed until a speaker has made a point.
- Listens with open mind as well as open ears.
- Catches main points in proper sequence.
- Associates details with appropriate main idea.
- Determines whether speaker is serious or facetious.
- Relates ideas heard to information gained from other sources.

Effective listening is basic to effective communication. It is the avenue through which a young child learns his first language. Throughout the elementary school, as well as throughout all of life, it continues to be the means by which language is enriched and knowledge is gained. As a child engages purposefully in communication, ability to listen becomes increasingly effective.

. . . Comunicate Ideas Effectively and Acceptably

Communication is a two-way process. It involves a person with a message and a person or persons able to receive it. Each must be interested in ideas inherent in the process. Each must understand the language being used. These factors are significant in all areas of communication and for people of all ages.

Language grows from the experiences a child has with people with whom he lives. He uses word forms and sentence patterns which he hears. He imitates the tone and rhythm of the speech of his associates. He copies their gestures. He accepts attitudes toward form and use of language which prevail in his community. He combines word forms, sentence patterns, gestures, tone, and rhythm to communicate with his associates. Thus, language becomes a personal matter, effective for all practical purposes and closely tied to feelings about self and persons who are loved and respected. To call attention to a child's language as being incorrect or unacceptable may jeopardize his future learning. Therefore, as efforts are made to help each child to communicate more effectively, care must be taken to insure that feelings of confidence and self-worth are fostered and maintained.

An atmosphere that permits and stimulates free use of language is basic to the development of power in all forms of communication. Children need the opportunity to exchange ideas and express their feelings in many different ways. They need the feeling of importance that comes when others listen with real interest to what they say. They need the sense of satisfaction that follows when others read with understanding and appreciation what they have written.

An atmosphere that allows children to express ideas freely is not easily created. A teacher bases plans for this kind of classroom atmosphere on the belief

that language differences are not the same as language deficiencies. She knows that many children find unfamiliar forms of language difficult to accept and hard to learn. She realizes that community and peer group pressures also play their part in building attitudes toward changes in forms of expression.

In attempting to develop attitudes that are favorable to language improvement, the teacher:

- Uses simple, direct language and a pleasant, friendly manner when speaking to children and adults.
- Listens courteously and attentively whenever a child speaks.
- Encourages children with varied language skills to talk and work together.
- Develops habits of thoughtful listening among children.
- Reads good literature to children and enjoys with them passages where language is especially effective or beautiful.
- Provides opportunities for choral reading.
- Makes recordings or tapes of well-read stories, poems, or plays available for use by individuals or groups.
- Provides opportunity for children to share written expression.
- Assists each child to prepare for participation in activities demanding more formal language by:

  Helping to set standards for participation in various language activities.

  Discussing plans for participation.

  Providing time for supervised rehearsal or speech activities.

  Cooperating in proofreading of rough drafts of written work.

Many situations arise naturally during the course of a school day which challenge a child to use the best language at his command. Guests must be greeted and introduced. Announcements must be made to adults and to other children. Notices must be prepared for the bulletin board. Telephone calls must be made or answered. Gratitude must be expressed and letters of appreciation must be written. Important messages must be delivered. The teacher takes advantage of each occasion as it arises and involves children in an appropriate manner.

As children come in contact with more people and encounter a variety of situations demanding use of language, they learn to understand that generally accepted standard forms of language are important. They become more aware of word meaning and word forms. They ask questions about usage, sentence structure, punctuation, and other mechanics of writing. These questions can often be answered best through instruction in language form and usage.

Instruction, if it is to be effective, must be planned to answer needs which children feel. All elementary children will not be ready for formal study of these aspects of language, so instruction should be directed to individuals or small groups of pupils. Effort should be made at all times to direct instruction toward improving oral and written communication, rather than toward systematic study of grammar and language structure.

If the purpose of instruction is to improve speech and writing, teachers should:

- Emphasize ideas that children find worth communicating and use this expression as the basis for instruction.
- Examine children's use of language for areas that need improvement:

  Isolate verb forms most commonly misused.

  Analyze errors in use of pronouns.

  Determine the extent of use of double negatives.

  Analyze written work to determine needed improvement in sentence structure: subject-verb agreement, misplaced modifiers, incomplete or disjointed sentences.
- Discuss needs with children and establish priorities for study.
- Use materials from language texts which are appropriate to a specific need.
- Help children apply knowledge gained through formal study.

Effective communication depends upon more than correct usage and form. Words must be grouped into sentences that convey the intended meaning. Sentences also must be combined into paragraphs to develop main ideas more completely. Some children appear to have a natural feeling for combining words to express ideas accurately and appropriately. Others need help. In such instances teachers must help children to:

- Examine sentences to determine whether:

  The intended meaning is clear.

  Key words have been given positions of importance.

  Words have been used to convey action precisely. For example:

  amble, pace, or wander instead of walk
  toss, heave, or hurl instead of throw
  nod, snore, doze instead of sleep.

  Sentences have been punctuated to give proper clues to meaning.
- Analyze paragraphs to:

  Place the main idea in a strategic position at either the beginning or the end of the paragraph.

  Include only sentences that relate to the main idea.

  Use a variety of sentence forms, including:

  Simple sentences and also simple sentences with subject and verb in reverse order. For example:

  Around the side of the mountain rattled
  a long string of freight cars.

Compound sentences with more than two clauses.

Complex sentences with clauses in various positions.

For example:

We will go home when the bell rings.
When the bell rings, we will go home.
The book that you want is on the table.

Study of form and structure of language is an important aid in the development of more effective and acceptable communication. Teachers must keep in mind, however, that language also develops as experiences broaden and as it becomes increasingly important to children to express ideas and feelings with accuracy and clarity. It is the need to communicate, more than instructional emphasis on form and structure, that motivates language development.

As a teacher plans with children ways to communicate more effectively and acceptably, she must seek always to understand the emotional factors which influence each child's use of language. She must work with all others concerned with a child's education to foster attitudes and values that insure lifetime growth in communication skills. Always in the foreground of a teacher's thinking must be concern for each child's feeling that he is accepted by adults and his peers and that he is equal to the task at hand.

. . . Develop and Maintain Interest in Wide Reading

Today's child has access to more printed matter and to a greater variety of content than any child in history. Resources in the form of paperback and hardback books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, advertisements, and television screens are abundant. The child is challenged to be informed, and at the same time to be selective in his choice of reading material. The rapid increase of knowledge, advances in communication, mobility of people, and a constantly broadening interest in people, places, and events, necessitates wider reading than has challenged children of past years.

In helping children to develop and maintain interest in wide reading a teacher builds, through a carefully planned instructional program, a firm foundation for continuous growth in reading skills. As skills develop, interest in reading expands and children are provided with a source of personal satisfaction and cultural enrichment.

Interest in reading begins at a very early age when parents are interested and share their enthusiasm for pictures, books, and objects with young children. The closeness and sense of security that children experience as they sit with someone to look at books, to turn pages, to talk about pictures, and to hear simple stories read and reread become identified as reading. Nursery rhymes chanted with parents or older brothers or sisters add pleasure and meaning to word sounds. Colorful books with pictures that a child can "read" to an appreciative audience or enjoy independently build self-confidence and add to early interest in books and reading.

Through various ways teachers may be able to help parents become aware of the influence of these early years on children's interest and subsequent skill in reading. Study groups or news letters for parents of preschool children may emphasize such suggestions as the following:

- Take children on short trips to learn about the many things of interest in the world.

- Read aloud or tell simple, rhythmic folk tales and nursery rhymes to young children.
- Enable children to see that other members of the family enjoy reading.
- Discuss selection of appropriate books with teachers, librarians, and others interested in children's literature.
- Provide opportunity for children to share in the selection and purchase of books.
- Provide a place for children to keep books.
- Give assistance when a child asks what a word on a grocery package says, what a word on television means, or what a picture in a storybook shows.
- Introduce children to "Easy Book" sections in public libraries.

Parents and other persons in the home continue to influence interest in reading as children grow older. Family discussion of articles in magazines, newspapers, and other current literature and family evaluation of television or moving picture productions broaden interests and enrich background experiences. Trips or excursions may create new interests and lead to more family reading.

Parents and children may work together to:

- Provide a quiet place in the home where children can read.
- Build a home library in keeping with children's needs and interests.
- Keep informed of special radio and television programs which supplement reading.
- Raise questions and seek answers as they explore interests.
- Learn to read directions, recipes, road maps, signs, menus, or telephone directories.

Some children encounter interesting, colorful books and people who are enthusiastic about reading for the first time after they enter school. They come in contact with a wide variety of materials and may experience for the first tim the excitement that comes with the sharing of ideas and feelings gained from picture books, recordings, film strips, motion pictures, and other instructional media. The role of the teacher in such instances becomes doubly significant. These children must be helped at school to appreciate reading as a source of enjoyment and information. The teacher gives much attention to helping children enjoy books in order to establish lifelong interest in reading.

As efforts are made to create interest in reading and to help children become familiar with a variety of materials, the teacher may:

- Tell stories to children.
- Read to children every day.
- Record happenings in the form of experience charts.
- Make tape recordings of stories for children to enjoy independently.
- Use a flannel board or other illustrative devices to extend meaning.
- Plan interesting, attractive bulletin boards.

- Discuss stories with children to extend understanding and to share enthusiasm.
- Provide opportunity for children to dramatize stories, creating the dialogue.
- Keep small, attractive, frequently changed, book collections at locations in the classroom which are convenient for browsing.
- Make filmstrips, films, and recordings of stories available for individual or small group use.

To stimulate interest in wide reading, teachers of older children must be aware of the nature and significance of the content of a variety of materials. A teacher must be able to suggest books related to a child's interest at a level of reading which he can understand and enjoy. This interest can often be stimulated by referring a child to other media dealing with the same subject: reference books, tapes, recordings, museum displays, art exhibits, music, or dance programs. Problems related to hobbies, out-of-school activities, or personal relationships send some children to books or other reading materials. Interest in reading can often be further stimulated by providing opportunity for children to utilize special interests in making contributions to class activities. For example, the teacher who knows of a child's interest in sailboats and is aware of the extent of his reading on the subject may be able to involve him in a meaningful way in a science discussion of wind currents. This contribution may introduce some reluctant reader to a whole new world.

In addition to keeping abreast of materials, teachers do many other things which stimulate interest in wide reading. They:

- Provide time for children to read independently.
- Provide opportunity for children to discuss books.
- Encourage children to read in depth and develop special interests to the point that they can become resources to classmates.
- Make bulletin board displays to highlight favorite poems or books.
- Extend reading interests through current events, newspapers, magazine clippings, cartoons, jokes, and riddles.
- Demonstrate, at all times, enthusiasm for reading as a pleasant and profitable experience.

The importance of small classroom book collections where easy access may stimulate browsing or reading has already been mentioned. This does not in any way minimize the importance of the central library where many materials are available and where services of a librarian enable children and teachers to secure materials to meet a wide range of interests and needs. Librarians are valuable resource people for both teachers and children. When librarians and teachers pool their knowledge of children and books, interest in reading grows. As they work together, teachers may:

- Help the librarian understand individuals with special reading needs or interests.
- Alert librarians to classroom projects or emphases that may require resource materials.

- Request special classroom loan collections of materials needed for short periods of time.
- Accompany classes or small groups to the library to observe the children's independence in using library aids, and to assist the librarian in extending the interests of children.

In this cooperative effort, the librarian may:

- Make library facilities easily accessible to children and teachers.
- Make every child feel that he is welcome in the library and that his concerns are important.
- Exhibit new books in interest-catching fashion.
- Visit classrooms to advertise new books.
- Enlist the help of children to give book talks in library or other classrooms.
- Sponsor "Book of the Week" displays.
- Exhibit books and companion recordings and/or filmstrips with equipment needed to enjoy them.
- Solicit help in selection of new books and other materials to be added to the library collection.

If teachers can help children to read extensively, to share what they have read, and sense the value of being well informed, then reading will become an important part of each child's life, both in and out of school.

. . . Learn Skills Necessary for Reading in Each Content Area

Each content area calls for specialized application of basic reading skills. For many children this means that appropriate, specific instruction must be provided if material is to be read effectively and with interest. Assuming that basic skills for word recognition and comprehension have been developed, readiness for reading social studies, science, literature, mathematics, and other content fields must often be given consideration. Differences in experiential background, language facility, and interest make special instruction necessary. Such instruction involves:

- Providing experiences to enable children to bring interest and understanding to reading in a specific content area.
- Helping children to recognize specific purposes for reading and to use reading study skills to suit those purposes.
- Introducing vocabulary uniquely related to a curriculum area.
- Familiarizing children with the way in which material is generally organized in each content area.

To be effective, this assistance must be provided in the setting in which the skill is used. Ability to read social studies is most effectively developed when a child needs a skill to gain information or understanding related to an area of social studies. Likewise, the ability to read material in mathematics is developed when information is needed to solve a problem. Each teacher has the responsi-

bility for helping children learn skills necessary to make reading in each curriculum area more functional and challenging.

As procedures related to reading in several content areas are suggested, effort is made to focus on purpose, vocabulary, and organization of material. Many different kinds of materials are used in social studies.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The purpose involved and the nature of the material determine the type of skill needed. History, geography, economics, or any other content related to social studies is read to gain understanding of man in his relationships to other people and to his physical environment. In realizing this purpose a child may read for various more immediate purposes, such as to:

- Share information with others.
- Collect data from a variety of sources related to a topic.
- Determine if books have needed information.
- Locate a particular idea.
- Answer specific questions.
- Detect propaganda devices in advertisements or news articles.
- Determine author's point of view.
- Obtain evidence to support a point of view.

It is obvious that in reading for purposes just stated, a child would at times read slowly, at other times he would skim. The teacher involves children in identifying purposes which guide a specific reading activity and in adapting reading procedures to the purpose to be served. The teacher assists the child with background experience and information that give meaning to vocabulary needed for social studies by:

- Building understanding through direct or vicarious experiences:

  Taking field trips.

  Viewing filmstrips or film loops.

  Collecting realia.

  Using recordings or tapes.

- Helping him understand and interpret the following:

  Figurative terms such as *soil bank*, *iron curtain*, or *cold war*.

  Words with meanings depending on context such as *belt*, *bill*, or *revolution*.

  Technical words such as *meridian*, *hemisphere*, *compass*, or *island*.

  Specialized concepts such as *civilization*, *democracy*, or *century*.

- Presenting words and terms in context.
- Making pictures to illustrate geographical terms.

Materials used in social studies are usually organized into chapters with head-

ings which indicate the topic. Paragraphs may be headed by phrases or sentences written in bold-faced type to indicate subtopics treated in the chapter. The topic sentence or main idea may be phrased as a question which is answered by sentences which follow. Teachers can help children read social studies material by:

- Providing guidance as children survey a chapter or specific topic to gain insight into content included.
- Developing understanding that organization of material is related to an outline.
- Assisting in the location of main ideas or topic sentences whether stated at beginning or close of a paragraph or group of paragraphs.
- Discussing the relationship of topic sentences to details that explain the main idea.
- Calling attention to study helps: subtitles, marginal notes, pictures, and other visual aids to comprehension.
- Emphasizing information and skills needed to read charts, tables, and graphs.

SCIENCE

Although science is learned through experimentation, demonstration, field trips, resource persons, or audio-visual materials, much is also learned by reading texts and various supplementary materials. The purpose for reading may be to:

- Reinforce or supplement what children have learned through observation or experimentation.
- Gain instructions for an activity.
- Prepare for an experiment.
- Locate the answer for a specific question.
- Obtain additional information to solve a problem.
- Verify findings or conclusions.

If science material is used appropriately, the reader also must be aware of the purpose for which a science book or story was written. It may have been written to:

- Entertain—as in stories in which animals talk.
- Inform—as in textbooks, reference books, or scientific articles.
- Stimulate thinking—as in some science fiction.

Teachers can help with the development of science vocabulary by:

- Expressing meanings of words in simple terms to make exact meaning clear.
- Discussing specialized meanings of certain terms.
- Relating words used in science to their use in other content areas.
- Building understanding of science words through experiments, discussions, reports, and other activities.

Caution should be exercised to insure that study of vocabulary not become a burdensome, laborious chore which stifles a child's natural curiosity about the world around him.

Teachers can help children read science materials more effectively by emphasizing certain features of organization:

- Broad categories into which the discipline is organized.
- Topics under which more specific information may be found.
- Organizational patterns used in different types of reference media: books, encyclopedias, bulletins, journals, magazines, newspapers, films, filmstrips, or transparencies.
- Relationship of charts, diagrams, or illustrations to printed text, concrete models, or realia.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics is read to gain understanding of a mathematical idea or operation or to get information needed to solve a problem. If these purposes are realized, reading must be done with attention to details and each bit of information must be carefully considered. Rapid reading or skimming is seldom functional in mathematics material.

Teachers must be sure that children are familiar with vocabulary specifically related to mathematics:

- Terms should be discussed and concrete models or pictures used to illustrate meaning.
- New terms should be analyzed so that they may be spelled correctly and used with confidence.
- Mathematical meanings for such familiar words as *face*, *point*, or *product* must be discussed and illustrated until the concept is clear.
- Terminology should be stressed after concepts involved are clearly in the child's mind.
- Symbols, part of the unique vocabulary of mathematics, must be learned and interpreted in the same manner as words.

Writers of mathematics books and other instructional media employ a wide variety of organizational schemes to present information or pose problems. Pictures, charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, mathematical sentences, and story problems intersperse paragraphs of explanatory text.

Teachers must be sure that children understand that:

- Information needed to solve a problem may be obtained by reading charts, tables, or graphs.
- Mathematical sentences use symbols as English sentences use words.
- A mathematical problem is a statement of:

  A situation to be visualized.

  Action clues to be recognized.

  Information to be assessed.

  Questions to be answered.

- Questions such as the following are stated or implied in each problem situation:

  What does the problem tell me?

  What am I asked to find out?

  What processes should I use in finding out?

  What would be a reasonable answer?

LITERATURE

Purposes for reading literature may not be outlined as objectively as in other content areas. Through biographies, stories, poems, and plays children gradually:

- Gain insight into their own feelings and those of others.
- Understand forces involving individuals and groups of people.
- Acquire positive values for building character.
- Develop a sense of what is good or beautiful in literature.

These are the unwritten purposes for children's continuous association with the content that makes literature distinctive. Insights and values are built over periods of time as children listen to stories read to them, learn to enjoy literature, and select material for independent reading.

A child will learn to adapt speed and type of reading to his unique purpose:

- Rapidly to follow the action or to see what happens next.
- Slowly to savor a bit of beauty or humor.
- Thoughtfully to visualize a descriptive passage.
- Repeatedly to relive an event or identify with a character.
- Creatively to dramatize a character or event.
- Randomly to skip needless descriptions or unnecessary explanations.

Vocabulary used in stories with familiar settings presents few problems to most readers. However, when the locale moves to other times or other places, children need help to realize that:

- Some familiar objects or places have different names in different countries. For example: *pram*, *biscuit* or *kiosk* in England, and *billy*, *cattle station* or *joey* in Australia.
- Some expressions used in earlier times are now obsolete.
- Some expressions used regionally are unfamiliar in other areas of the state or nation.

Organizational patterns used in literary selections are different:

- Some stories introduce the climax at a very early point in the narrative, then lapse back to develop background for what has happened.
- Poetry employs many different organizational schemes:

  Stanzas may replace paragraphs.

  Sentences may appear in a variety of forms differing from the usual noun-verb-noun pattern.

For example: *"One night came on a hurricane*
The sea was mountains rolling." [1]

- Incomplete sentences may be used to convey an idea.

  For example: *"Beautiful soup so rich and green*
  Waiting in a hot tureen!" [2]

- Rhythm, rhyme, and poetic language are used to establish a mood.

  For example: *"Once upon a midnight dreary*
  While I pondered weak and weary" [3]

- Details of setting and action for drama are given in interlined and marginal notes, often in fine print. Details of plot action are learned from dialogue of characters. Material is organized into acts and shorter scenes, often with periods of time elapsing between scenes.

Teachers help children, either individually or in groups, to develop skills necessary to enjoy and learn from literature by helping them to:

- Read between the lines for implied meanings.
- Recognize figures of speech.
- Ask themselves questions after reading a literary form:

  What message did the author bring to me?

  What did the author do to keep me interested?

  What did the author do to my feelings?

  Do you think this was realistic or fanciful literature?

  Could the story happen at any time or in any place?

  Which characters would I like to know better?

  Which characters do I think the author likes best?

In addition to suggestions given above for the improvement of reading in four content areas, certain general skills are needed in all areas. Independency in reading or study is increased when children can:

- Use table of contents, index, and glossary.
- Use dictionaries and other different types of reference books.
- Understand the Dewey Decimal Classification System used in most libraries.
- Understand and use resources available in a library card catalogue.
- Locate materials in the library.
- Use guides to poetry and periodical literature.
- Understand the significance of such clues as headlines and italicized words.

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[1] Dibdin: "The Sailor's Consolation"
[2] Carroll, Lewis: "Beautiful Soup"
[3] Poe, Edgar A.: "The Raven"

- Operate simple equipment needed for available media.

When a child has a real purpose for reading, when he can bring to the reading act a degree of background experience, when he is reasonably familiar with terminology used in the content, when he understands the format of the material, and when all adults involved in his learning share responsibility for continued growth, skills needed for reading in all content areas should develop.

. . . Develop Power in Written Expression

The ability to communicate through writing is the most difficult to acquire of all the language skills. It is a skill which develops gradually as people attempt to convey ideas, create impressions, arouse feelings, or express a sense of beauty. It is a skill which grows only as individuals have freedom to experiment with the written word. The ability develops slowly because it takes time and maturity for a writer to:

- Decide what he wants to write and arrange the ideas in proper order.
- Acquire a rich and meaningful vocabulary.
- Put ideas into words and words into sentences in a manner that will be understood by the readers.
- Use appropriate punctuation to guide the reading.
- Choose letters to spell words correctly.
- Control muscles to produce legible handwriting.

Most children discover what writing is long before they are able to use it. They see parents writing or reading letters and other written materials. They may dictate their own messages to be included in family letters. In school the young child may be part of a group discussing plans or stories to be recorded on the chalkboard. He may dictate his own story to be copied and illustrated for the reading table. Thus the child learns that writing is necessary when speech is not practical or possible, and when ideas are to be preserved for later use.

Early experiences with writing may determine the use a child makes of this form of expression and the degree to which it develops. When a child has a message to convey, or a feeling to express, he sees a reason for writing. When he knows that his written expression will be read, he has real purpose for writing clearly and accurately.

When the purpose for writing is to communicate personal feelings or ideas, it is seldom that all members of a group will work on a topic or assignment at the same time. The teacher then takes advantage of every opportunity to stimulate individuals to write. Besides assisting in the writing of invitations and letters of appreciation and in the preparation of written reports in connection with work in various content areas, the teacher may:

- Help children write a story cooperatively as someone contributes a beginning sentence and each person adds a sentence or two.
- Hold brainstorming sessions to originate and share ideas for creative writing.
- Encourage children to write and illustrate booklets for younger children to read.

- Plan for periodic "publication" of original stories or reports to be shared with parents and friends.
- Schedule regular times when children who are ready may read their stories or poems to groups of interested listeners.
- Arrange for correspondence with children in other schools or countries.
- Invite a local writer to visit the class to share ideas about the problems and pleasures of authors.
- Keep an eye on reluctant writers to help them find a real purpose for writing and an appreciative reading audience.

Many children who have a real purpose for writing need help in the process. The teacher must be prepared to assist small groups with similar needs or individuals with special problems. From time to time there will be need to:

- Discuss a topic of interest in order to help the child clarify his ideas and decide what he wants to write.
- Assist in making a simple outline.
- Stand by to encourage the pupil while a rough draft is written.
- Help individuals or small groups to edit their own work.
- Show interest and appreciation during all stages of the process.
- Express appreciation for writing that has individuality of style and that reflects the personality of the writer.
- Assist in evaluating the final product and developing guidelines for improvement of future written work.
- Evaluate written expression on the basis of an individual's improvement.

In helping children grow in ability to express ideas in written form, teachers must keep in mind that some children are reluctant to share their writing with others. This feeling should be respected until such time as the child is ready to make his work public. As children hear others discuss their own work impersonally, reluctance to participate usually disappears. However, teachers should continue to discuss ideas and keep in close touch with these children until such time as they are confident enough to share their written work.

All children should be encouraged to preserve samples of their own written work. As they reread collections of writing done over a period of time, growth can be more readily observed and emerging style can be appreciated. In developing power in written expression, this type of personal assessment can be effective. Ability to express thoughts and feelings in writing increases as interests broaden, as purposes for writing enlarge, and as self-confidence grows.

. . . Acquire and Maintain Functional Skills in Handwriting and Spelling

Spelling and handwriting are necessary tools for communication and self-expression. Therefore, effective written communication requires accurate spelling and legible handwriting. The combined efforts of *all* teachers are needed to help children develop and maintain skills necessary to spell correctly and write easily, legibly, and with sufficient speed to suit their purposes.

A genuine desire to learn and a feeling of pride in written communication are essential to develop and maintain skills in spelling and handwriting. These attitudes can be developed when the teaching becomes functional. Children recognize the importance of accurate spelling and writing when they sense a real purpose for writing and when there is assurance that what is written will be read by an interested reader. The teacher, therefore, is challenged to take advantage of every opportunity to capitalize on children's need for written expression and to use these situations to help each child develop skill in writing and spelling.

Activities such as the following may provide real purpose for writing:

- Letters to relatives and friends.
- Thank-you notes and invitations.
- Greeting cards.
- Stories, plays, poems, and diaries.
- Newspaper articles.
- Business letters.
- Captions for bulletin board displays.

Although spelling and handwriting are closely related, direct teaching will be necessary to develop skills peculiar to each.

Instruction for handwriting must be geared to the mental and physical development of children. Nerve, muscle, and eye coordination necessary for handwriting must develop before systematic practice needed for letter formation can be expected. Since some children will achieve this development earlier than others, aspects of the instruction must be individualized. Opportunity must be provided for those who need special assistance to:

- Write at the chalkboard to develop muscular coordination.
- Use primary paper over a longer period of time.
- Practice on individual letter forms.
- Use models as needed to improve formation of individual letters.
- Use seating arrangements suitable for left-handed writers.

Certain general guides to teaching handwriting may be applied when appropriate:

- Observe each child to diagnose needs and to provide specific instruction.
- Provide learning experiences which will help young children develop muscular coordination.
- Make provision for comfortable physical setting.
- Provide appropriate materials.
- Help child determine position which is best for ease in writing.
- Guide child in forming numerals as pages in booklets are numbered, telephone numbers are written, and numerals are used for other purposes.
- Provide instruction for transition from manuscript to cursive when a child shows readiness.

- Maintain skill in manuscript writing in intermediate and upper grades for use in making posters, printing charts, and labeling maps and graphs.
- Help child to understand and use form and spacing suitable to written material.
- Encourage neatness and legibility as individuality emerges in the style of writing of older children.
- Recognize that children learn neatness and the value of legibility from examples set by the teacher.
- Help child to develop a positive attitude toward diagnosis and correction of errors.

Specific help also must be given to insure that children know how to learn to spell new words. The following suggestions may be helpful as teachers work with individual children:

- Identify specific instructional needs by:

  Observing to determine if a child has auditory or visual difficulties.

  Analyzing spelling errors in written work.

- Help children to use multi-sensory approaches by:

  Looking at words and listening to pronunciation.

  Linking sounds to letters or symbols.

  Tracing words on paper or in the air.

  Isolating difficult portions of words for specific attention.

  Writing words from memory and checking for accuracy.

  Rewriting words from memory.

- Help children to discover patterns in words and to generalize by using such questions as:

  How many syllables in a word?

  Which syllable is stressed?

  How are words changed by prefixes and suffixes?

- Help children to become more conscious of words by:

  Encouraging them to proofread written work.

  Encouraging them to list words needed in personal writing.

  Talking about words.

  Discussing colorful words found in stories, newspapers, and magazines.

  Making available a variety of dictionaries and thesauruses.

  Providing opportunity to dramatize or pantomime words.

Learning how to spell and write is largely an individual matter. As the teacher evaluates to determine needs and to plan activities, she may find help by

consulting and using teachers' guides in spelling and handwriting which have specific suggestions for ways to help a child acquire a needed skill. Many other aids, including transparencies, pictures, filmstrips, and writing specimens are available. It is the responsibility of the teacher to help the child grow in assessing his own needs and to plan and implement a program which will help him to develop skills needed in handwriting and spelling.

. . . Follow Directions Thoughtfully

There are times in the life of every one, child or adult, when the ability to follow directions is highly important. Fire drills, traffic regulations, recipes, blue prints, or prescriptions for medicines, all demand exact interpretation and careful execution. Printed forms of various types are used extensively in all areas of work. Unless directions relating to correct completion of such forms are carefully followed, problems may be encountered.

The ability to follow directions is a fundamental study skill needed in all areas of the curriculum. It is a process of thinking and reasoning. It involves ability to:

- Understand the language or the terminology used in giving the directions.
- Form mental pictures of each step of the operation.
- Visualize these steps in proper sequence.
- Perform each step of the operation.

More significant, probably, than any ability listed above is understanding of the purpose or reason for which directions are given. Answering an alarm by forming lines quickly and quietly and moving directly to a predesignated spot is a fire drill routine that must be followed to the letter. When children understand that adherence to each step in the process may sometime make the difference between safety and tragedy for themselves or their classmates, they become conscious of need for strict observance.

Increased use of computers and other electronic devices makes it necessary to follow directions exactly in filling out forms of various kinds. When children understand the reasons for using certain pencils, for marking items in a specific manner, and for keeping forms neat and uncrumpled, directions make sense and can be followed more accurately.

Limited space for storing equipment and supplies often makes it necessary to adhere strictly to directions for distribution and care of materials.

A teacher who strives to help children learn to follow directions must be sure that they:

- Have participated in planning activities.
- Have had a part in establishing rules or regulations which guide day by day activities.
- Realize the significance of the directions to be followed.
- Understand and accept purposes behind those regulations which must be made by others.

Understanding and acceptance of purpose may be all that some children need to enable them to follow directions. They have learned to listen and to read. This presupposes, of course, that instructions or directions are clearly expressed,

either orally or in written form. Other pupils may need specific help. The teacher must be sure that:

- Children are attentive when directions are given.
- Oral directions are expressed in a clear, positive, and pleasant manner.
- Instructions are not repeated as a matter of course.
- Written directions can be interpreted by every child.
- Unfamiliar words are discussed in sufficient detail to make meaning perfectly clear to every child.
- Operations not previously performed are demonstrated, discussed, and practiced before a child is expected to act independently in following instructions.
- Children with hearing or vision handicaps are seated where they can hear or see well.

Children who seem unable to form mental pictures of an operation may gain insight from role playing with each step acted out in proper sequence. For example:

> One child representing the teacher may instruct another to go to a section of the room to locate a book or piece of equipment to be delivered to a third person in a designated spot. The manner in which instructions are given as well as the accuracy with which they are carried out may be discussed.

Signs that children do not understand well enough to follow directions must be heeded.

- The child whose attention wanders may be led to listen by:

  A smile directed especially to him.

  Reference to a previous question or contribution which he may have stated.

  A request for help with a point with which he is familiar.

  A question related to the purpose of directions being given.

- The child with a puzzled look on his face may need:

  A reassuring smile.

  Restatement of purpose or objective.

  Explanation of terminology.

  Clarification of an idea or operation.

  Relocation of desk or position at a table.

- Children who constantly ask questions about directions need either reassurance or a kind but firm denial of additional support.
- Some children persist in beginning work before oral instructions are completed or before written instructions are read in their entirety. They need to be cautioned about the possible consequence of lack of attention.

While learning to follow directions is a much needed skill and one not to be neglected in the total process of learning, it is equally important for each child to learn to be resourceful, and to act on thinking. The problem, then, becomes one of determining the types of language experience which help children to learn to act on thinking and to face new or challenging experiences with confidence.

To be resourceful, a child needs:

- Opportunities to meet new situations under conditions which are not frustrating or confusing.
- Faith that the people he knows will help him to face mistakes naturally and to profit from them under other conditions.
- A store of basic background information. For example:

  A young child who becomes lost yet knows his full name, his parent's or guardian's name, his street address, and telephone number, or who can give a description of his neighborhood is more likely to help others locate his home than to panic and become helpless.

  An older child who knows where to find and how to use a variety of resource materials is able to work independently on a project or problem.

As teachers plan ways to help children behave intelligently in following directions and in acting on their own initiative, careful consideration should be given to the following questions:

- To what extent should children be trained to be skillful followers of directions imposed by others?
- Does increased skill in critical thinking decrease the need for instruction in how to follow directions?
- Do opportunities to exercise initiative, resourcefulness, or creativity decrease the number of situations which might demand regulation or specific directions?